

The Christmas of Private Jackson

IN Company K of a volunteer regiment that was camped in Manila a year ago there was a soldier named Isaac Jackson. He was just a common, everyday sort of man, a good enough fellow to get along with, but one whose talents and personality never would attract any particular attention. Previous to his enlistment he had been a hostler in a livery stable, and in the village where he lived his social status was considered a minus quantity.

The town of Falcounhurst was a place of aristocratic pretensions, and the leading people of the municipality prided themselves on being up to date. Consequently when the whole country was interested in the sending of Christmas boxes to soldiers on foreign service the members of the exclusive set of Falcounhurst resolved to do their share. At an informal meeting held one evening at the residence of Brewster De Kalb, the bank president, it was resolved to appoint a committee consisting of six fashionable ladies and a half dozen of the wealthiest men in the community to prepare a suitable Christmas box to be sent to "the heroes who had left their homes in Falcounhurst to do battle for their country's flag in the faroff Philippines."

The select committee entered into the work with enthusiasm. On the first day there was collected a vast assortment of things that it was thought the soldiers would like. As the stuff was being packed in the big box that was to be shipped to Manila one of the ladies chanced to ask the names of the boys who had enlisted from Falcounhurst. No one present was able to answer the question, and, fearful that their town had no heroes whom they could honor, the bank president's wife went at once to make further inquiries of her husband. Although this worthy man was supposed to know all about everybody who was anybody in Falcounhurst, he could not immediately call to mind the name of a single volunteer, and rather shamefacedly he so stated to his wife. But just then his office boy, who had overheard the question and answer, spoke up and said that "Ike Jackson, who used to work in Jones' livery stable," had joined the army and gone to Manila. The banker made an investigation and found that with the exception of Ike Jackson no one had enlisted from Falcounhurst.

When it became known that Jackson was the only volunteer of whom Fal-



THIRTY-EIGHT LETTERS AND A CHRISTMAS BOX.

conhurst could boast there was some disappointment in certain quarters, but it was felt that the honor of the town had been saved by a small majority. And by one of those sudden turns which public opinion often takes the absent Jackson was made much of. People who hardly desired to notice him when he lived in their midst called upon the committee with parcels and kindly messages that they wished to send to their "old friend, Mr. Jackson."

Possibly no box that was sent to the Philippines ever contained a greater variety of presents. Everything, from champagne to ginger snaps, was most carefully packed into the Christmas box. There were reading matter galore, knickknacks of every description and other good things too numerous to mention.

When the box was finally filled and mailed up it took four men to load it into the wagon which was to haul it to the depot.

Having packed the box and started the package on its way across the continent, those concerned in their work felt it obligatory upon themselves to write Jackson that he might know to whom to give the proper credit.

In camp one night the boys of Company K were discussing the approach of Christmas and speculating upon what they might get from home. Poor Jackson took no part in the conversation. He had no relatives living, and to his knowledge there was not any one in America who would bother about sending him even a Christmas card. When asked if he hoped to get a package he shook his head and said that he would be the last man in Manila that the folks in the United States would remember.

On Christmas eve the first sergeant announced that thirty-eight letters and a Christmas box that weighed "about a ton" were waiting to be received for Private Jackson. Company K had a very merry Christmas, but through it all the maintained his usual cheerfulness. The amount of stuff that Jackson received, together with his liberality with which he distributed it, caused to be circulated through the regiment a story to the effect that he was a millionaire in disguise. Manila American.

MYSTERY OF MYSTERIES.

A Christmas Task For Homelock Sherries, the Detective.

It was the day after Christmas. Homelock Sherries and I sat in the Butcher street rooms cursing the snowy, sloppy weather.

"Bless me! Mulroon's come home sober!" he suddenly remarked as the bark of a dog came in from the hall.

"How on earth can you tell?" I marvelled, for no sound of man's voice had been heard.

"Because his dog doesn't know him," answered my friend, with a gleam in his eye. "For a veterinary surgeon you let a great many 'horses' get on you, old man."

Another period of silence, and then Sherries reached up his long white hand and took down the bottle of gin.

"No more of this!" he mused aloud. "Now begins a period of hard work for me."

"Hard work?" I asked wonderingly.

"Why, I haven't heard of any recent murders, robberies or disappearances."

"None of these this time, old man. All mysteries. Every young man in town will soon be here to have me find out what the Christmas present his girl gave him is intended for, don't you know?"—New York Journal.

Evolution of Christmas.

It is said that Christmas was at one time quite a movable feast and kept when the weather and circumstances permitted and that one of the early popes fixed on Dec. 25. Gradually the custom of singing carols and carols was introduced by the church in remembrance of those songs of the heavenly host that amazed the shepherds on the Galilean hills and sent them off in hot haste to find the wondrous babe.

The holy and mistletoe decorations, of course, descended from the Druids, and a pretty fancy reigned which suggested that the sylvan spirits would be induced to follow the evergreen branches into house and church and remain there, sheltered from the utmost rigor of winter frosts and snows. Then the Yule log was lit on Christmas eve and the fire never allowed to go out before Candlemas, a device for securing warmth during the coldest weeks, while people sat around the hearth and amused themselves with hot cookies and snapdragon, conjuring and forfeits and quaffed spiced ale and punch, much as their descendants crack jokes "over the walnuts and the wine" of these days between Christmas and the new year, when business is at a standstill and the children clamor for parties and pantomimes.

Observances in England.

The lighting of Christmas candles and the burning of the "Christmas block" were the sure heralds of the season in old England, and the customs still survive in certain parts of the country. In some counties a piece of the Yule log is kept from one year to the next, in order to light the next year's log. In ancient times this fragment was supposed to be a protection against fire and thunder. Its ashes were given to animals for certain sickness and were scattered over the land to keep the corn from blight.

In Devonshire what is known as the "Ashton fagot" is burned on Christmas eve, and a company watches the falling apart of the hoops with which the fagot is bound as they burst with the heat. In some parts of England, after the church service, the people express their joy by crying out in chorus: "Yule! Yule!"

Seasonable Advice.

"I shan't want one," said Kitty, "unless it has real teeth."

"Never look a Christmas doll in the mouth, Kitty," counseled her uncle.—Chicago Tribune.

CHRISTMAS POEMS.

By James Whitcomb Riley.

A word of godspeed and good cheer
To all on earth or far or near.
Or friend or foe, or thine or mine,
In echo of the voice divine
Heard when the star bloomed forth and lit
The world's face, with God's smile on it.

By Ben Jonson.

I sing the birth was born tonight,
The author both of life and light.
The angel so did sound it
And like the ravished shepherds said,
Who saw the light and were afraid,
Yet searched and true they found it.

By Sir Walter Scott.

Edgland was merry England when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas brought the mightiest
ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale.
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer
A poor man's heart through half the year.

By Harriet Beecher Stowe.

[Written at the age of eighty-two.]
Hail, blessed Christmas morn!
When Christ, a child, was born
Of Mary, holy maid,
In heavenly grace arrayed.
Amen! Halleluiah!

Cures Cancer and Blood Poison.

If you have blood poison producing eruptions, pimples, ulcers, swollen glands, bump and rising, burning, itching skin, copper-colored spots or rash on the skin, mucous patches in mouth or throat, falling hair, bone pains, old rheumatism or foul catarrh, take Botanic Blood Balm (B. B. B.). It kills the poison in the blood; soon all sores, eruptions, heal, hard swellings subside, aches and pains stop and a perfect cure is made of the worst cases of Blood Poison.

For cancers, tumors, swellings, eating sores, ugly ulcers, persistent pimples of all kinds, take B. B. B. It destroys the cancer poison in the blood, heals cancer of all kinds, cures the worst tumors or suppurating swellings. Thousands cured by B. B. B. after all else fails. B. B. B. composed of pure botanic ingredients. Improves the digestion, makes the blood pure and rich, stops the awful itching and all sharp, shooting pains. Thoroughly tested thirty years. Druggists \$1 per large bottle, with directions for home cure. Sample free and prepaid by writing Blood Balm Co., Atlanta, Ga. Describe trouble and send free medical advice also sent in sealed letter. For sale by Evans Pharmacy.

A hair-tonic manufacturer says that bald men have good heads for business.

Xmas Near the North Pole

"I THINK Christmas, 1883, was my most memorable one," said General Greely, the arctic explorer. "With my command I was proceeding southward in the hope of obtaining help, and about the 20th of October we encountered ourselves in a little hut at Cape Sabine. Our supply of food was running very low, and we were on very short rations, every one being allowed just food enough in each twenty-four hours to sustain life. Under these depressing circumstances and amid the awful silence of the polar night the cheerfulness that we continued to maintain was remarkable. It would have been a splendid opportunity for Dickens' character, Mark Tapley, who was always seeking some specially depressing situation in life to show how jolly he could be under adverse circumstances. As the Christmas season approached we all looked forward to it with eager anticipation, not only as a festive day the associations and memories of which would to some extent vary the wearisome monotony of our lives, but because we knew that the winter solstice would fall about Dec. 22 and that then the sun would return and the long, dreary night be at an end."

"Christmas day came at last. Christmas in the arctic regions! At 6 o'clock

we had our breakfast—thin soup made of peas, carrots, blubber and potatoes. Our Christmas dinner was served at 1 o'clock. Hearken to our menu, ye who will sit down the coming Christmas to roast turkey stuffed with oysters: First course, a stew of seal meat, onions, blubber, potatoes and bread crumbs; second course, served one hour after first, a stew of raisins, blubber and milk; dessert, a cup of hot chocolate. The best and most Christmaslike feature of this meal was that we were allowed a sufficient quantity of it to satisfy the pangs of hunger. Our enjoyment of the dessert, one cup of chocolate, we tried to prolong as much as possible. Over it we told each other Christmas stories. We exchanged reminiscences of bygone Christmases at home with the loved ones so far away. We discussed the probability of our ever reaching our own fireplaces again, and we entered into an agreement that if we got back to civilization before another Christmas we would pass the day together in memory of that awful Christmas we were then spending in the realm of the relentless ice king. Alas, many of those brave fellows never lived to see another Christmas!"—Buffalo Express.

Christmas Dinner Recipes.

Chestnut stuffing is the most delicious that can go with a Christmas turkey. Shell a quart of Italian or French chestnuts. Put in hot water and boil until the skins are softened; drain off the water and remove the skins. Press them, a few at a time, through a colander and season with butter, salt and pepper. Add chopped parsley, onion and bread crumbs and season with stock.

Giblet Sauce.—Boil the giblets until tender; chop them, but not too fine, and add a tablespoonful of flour to the pan in which the turkey was roasted. Brown the flour, stirring constantly, adding slowly a cupful of water in which the giblets were boiled; season with salt and pepper and add the chopped giblets.

A Country Named For Christmas.

South Africa was discovered by the Portuguese, who were searching for an ocean road to India. Bartholomew Diaz was the commander of the two little ships that formed the expedition in 1486. Eleven years later Da Gama took another Portuguese fleet south. He discovered Natal on Christmas day and thus named it in consequence.

Tale of a Christmas Survivor.

"But where is that beautiful tale you had day before yesterday?"

"The farmer said, 'Heads I win, tails you lose.' Well, I took to my heels and lost my tail, but he did not win my head."

—It might be just as well to remember that fast men are usually slow pay.

—If you would have lasting fame don't give the world a chance to forget you.

—The best way to pray for the poor is with your own basket and store.

—You cannot make clouds for others and live in the clear light yourself.

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XMAS A DAY OF TERROR.

Hard Lines of the Players Who Entertain Theater Crowds.

In the vaudeville houses where continuous performances are given Christmas day strikes terror to the most time hardened dramatic soul.

The doors open anywhere between 9:30 and 10:30 a. m. and close at about midnight. The headliners play their customary two turns, but those lower in the dramatic scale play "on demand," generally about four times. If an act is particularly weak, it is used to "chase" out the audience—in plain English, to tire it into leaving the house and making room for the line waiting in the lobby.

The low salaried vaudeville actor, therefore, eschews any Christmas dinner and hies himself to the nearest quick lunch counter, there to feast on turkey sandwiches, execrable coffee and pie as heavy as his spirits. By the time he has done his last turn on the stage he is more ready for bed than for the festive board.

To the unsuccessful actor Christmas is likely to bring that blessing of the Rialto, a "turkey date."

Scattered within easy access of New York are numerous small cities, or, more properly speaking, towns, where good shows never come. Of these the catapenny manager keeps a list, and on each notice he scours Broadway for cheap, unengaged talent, from which he organizes his company, rehires it hastily in some playhouse conveniently close at hand, rushes some cheap printing upon the poor, unsuspecting town and lands there bright and early Christmas morning. The population, show hungry, welcomes the holiday diversion and packs the town hall, matinee and night.

The actors are thus assured of a good Christmas dinner and supper and a percentage of the box office receipts. Usually these are divided according to the importance of the roles played by the actors. This will tide them over until New Year's day, which brings another "turkey date."

Many an actor now featured on Broadway has played his share of "turkey dates." One in particular tells how, with five associates, he put on "The Clemenceau Case," not abashed that the cast called for no less than twelve capable actors, and was quite radiant over the returns of "one Christmas dinner with trimmings" and \$125 to be divided among the actors.—Washington Post.

A Terrible Disease.

A girl of eight years in company of one of her elders was passing the Episcopal clergy house at Milwaukee, in which is the office of the diocese of Wisconsin, and the name accordingly in large letters is painted on a front window. As they approached the house she said:

"Now you must put your handkerchief to your nose and run." Suiting the action to the word, off she skipped.

"What in the world did you do that for?" inquired her companion.

"Why," she replied gravely, "they have the smallpox there. Didn't you see the sign up, 'Disease of Wisconsin'?"—Philadelphia Ledger.

The Inexperienced Shooter.

"I should think you'd be afraid that some of these amateur hunters would mistake you for the bear," remarked the tourist.

"Oh, that ain't where the danger comes in," returned the guide. "So long as they take me for the bear I'm safe. It's when they're really shootin' at the bear that the danger to me comes in."—Chicago Post.

By Rudyard Kipling.

High noon behind the tamarisks—the sun is hot above us
As at home the Christmas day is breaking
They will drink our healths at dinner
Those who tell us how they love us
And forget us till another year be gone!

If a man knows how to make his garden grow his wife can believe he knows how to do most anything.

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A FAITHFUL DOG.

He Paid For His Fidelity to His Master With His Life.

In the early days of North Carolina a man rode a long distance on horseback to collect a debt of several hundred dollars. He took with him for company and as a protection against robbers a dog to which he had long felt much attached. He collected the money, all in silver dollars. These he tied up in a strong sack, lashed it to the saddle behind him and started for home.

When they had traveled about half of the homeward journey the dog manifested a great deal of uneasiness, to which he gave expression by nervous barking and frequent dives at the horse's fore legs. The man was sorely puzzled and watched the dog for some time to see if he could find an explanation of its strange conduct. His reluctant conclusion was that it had been bitten by a mad dog and was the victim of hydrophobia, and so to save his horse and to put the poor dog out of the misery he supposed it was suffering he drew a pistol and shot it. Not wishing to see it die, he applied the spurs to his horse and rode rapidly for some distance. The thought came to him, "I would rather have lost the money than to have been forced to kill that good dog."

The reminded of the treasure, he put his hand around behind the saddle to see if the bag was safe, but it was not there. He turned and rapidly rode back. When he reached the point where the dog first commenced to bark and plunge at the horse's legs he found the bag of coin, and the poor victim of his cruel mistake dying there, with his paws resting patiently on either side of his master's treasure. He had tried so hard to make the master understand, but had failed, and paid his life as the price of his fidelity.—Springfield Republican.

Would Not Advertise.

Once upon a time a donkey fell into a deep hole and after nearly starving caught sight of a passing fox and implored the stranger to help him out.

"I am too small to aid you," said the fox, "but I will give you some advice. Only a few rods away is a big, strong elephant. Call to him, and he will get you out in a jiffy."

After the fox had gone the donkey thus reasoned: "I am very weak from want of nourishment. Every move I make is just so much additional loss of strength. If I raise my voice to call the elephant I shall be weaker yet. No, I will not waste my substance that way. It is the duty of the elephant to come without calling."

So the donkey settled himself back and eventually starved to death.

Long afterward the fox on passing the hole saw within a whitened skeleton and remarked:

"If it be that the souls of animals are transmigrated into men that donkey will become one of those who can never afford to advertise."—Cassell's.

New Year's Cookies.

Beat to a cream three-quarters of a pound of butter and a pound of sugar. Add three eggs and beat them through the butter and sugar till thoroughly mingled. Then add half a pint of sour milk and a level teaspoonful of saleratus dissolved in a tablespoonful of hot water. Next put in a gill of caraway seeds and a level teaspoonful of mace. Stir in flour till the dough is stiff enough to roll out thin. After it is rolled as thin as pie crust cut the cookies out with a scalloped round cutter. Lift them with a pancake knife from the pastry board, put them in a dripping pan, sprinkle over each cookie a little sugar and bake them in a moderate oven